



**Newbubbles**  
Experts in Further Education



# The FE Toolkit: A Magazine for Grade 1 Teachers

## COACHING & MENTORING

### SPECIAL FEATURES

ASSESSMENT CORNER	1
NATIONAL CONFERENCE	2
COACHING CULTURES	4
GROW MODEL	5
TARGET-SETTING	7
COACHING TEACHERS	9

### IN-FOCUS

#### The Importance of Coaching

In one US study, research indicates that teachers need close to fifty hours of CPD in a given area to improve their skills and their students' learning (Darling-Hammond and others, 2009).

*The Anneberg Report* (2004), a highly influential US report on coaching, stated that coaching:

- Increases collaboration
- Increases reflection
- Improves use of data
- Promotes accountability
- Stimulates change

### John Adair

*'Coaching' has the ability to bring humanity back to the workplace'.*

*From 'Effective Coaching' (2003)*



### The Management Dilemma:

Many performance issues are actually the result of a misunderstanding in the way managers and employees define and measure their work! (Fournies, 2000)

### Assessment Corner

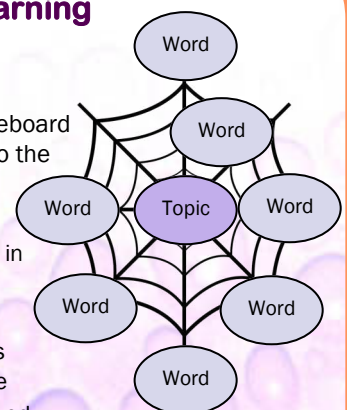
#### Word Web....

A Word Web is a list of words written up randomly on a wipeboard that requires students to explain how each word is linked to the rest of the list using information covered in the session.

To run a word web:

- At the start of a lesson, write a list of key vocabulary terms in one corner of the wipeboard
- Tick the words off as you discuss these in class
- At the end of the lesson, put the words up randomly across the full length of the wipeboard, with the topic in the centre
- Nominate students to explain how particular words are linked with each other, and ask them to describe the *strength* of the association using information from the lesson (the teacher indicates this by drawing in a thick/thin joining line)

#### Simple ways to test learning





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### Too Much Prescription?

Many learners in further education come through schooling feeling let down by a system that focuses heavily on measurement and prescription. Isn't education worth something more than simply 'passing a test'?

### Rushanara Ali MP

Rushanara Ali is the MP for Bethnal Green & Bow and the Labour Party's Shadow Minister for Education. With the conference poised irresistibly five weeks before the General Election, this is a unique opportunity to find out more about the Labour Party's plans for Further Education.



Rushanara Ali MP

### Educating for What Purpose?

Further Education is simply about getting learners into jobs, isn't it? Or is it more than this? Like a musician who discovers the beauty of a piece of music for the first time, how can teachers create lasting, meaningful learning experiences?

### Professor Robert Winston

Celebrated TV scientist and educator Robert Winston joins the conference this year to discuss his incredible ability to engage learners with the most complicated scientific ideas.



Professor Robert Winston

### Best Practice?

We are delighted to welcome back **Professor Frank Coffield** to the 2015 Newbubbles National Further Education Conference.



In an era of recipes and blueprints for outstanding teaching and learning, Frank Coffield's keynote entitled: *'Teachers as Powerful, Democratic Professionals'* and his workshop theme: *'There's No Such Thing as Best Practice'* is sure to raise eyebrows and temperatures alike! Come and join the debate.

### Speakers

The list of speakers at the Newbubbles 2015 National Conference is fast becoming a Who's Who in Further Education.



This year, speakers include:

- Geoff Petty (see above)
- Professor Susan Wallace
- Marina Gaze HMI (OFSTED's Deputy Director for Learning & Skills)
- Sarah Robinson (Principal for Stoke-on-Trent College)
- Andy Green (Deputy Principal for Chichester College)
- Dr John Lea (Canterbury Christ Church College)
- Dr Jean Kelly (CEO, Institute for Learning)



## COACHING VS MENTORING



### Differences Between Coaching and Mentoring:

**Coaching:** A method of directing, instructing and training a person or group of people with the aim to enhance performance, achieve some goal or develop specific skills. The coach advises the person on how to tackle and perform a particular task by providing feedback and setting targets that enable the task to be completed effectively.

**Mentoring:** A relationship between a more experienced mentor and a less experienced mentee with the aim of supporting the latter's knowledge and personal development at work. The mentor is not normally a line manager because of the mentor's need to stay impartial and non-judgemental within that relationship.

#### Coaching

Coaching is usually focused professional dialogue designed to aid the coachee in developing specific professional skills to enhance their teaching repertoire.

For teachers it often supports experimentation with new classroom strategies.

Coaches are not normally in positions of line management in relation to their coachee.

Coaching for enhancing teaching and learning is not normally explicitly linked to a career transition.

The focus of the coaching is usually selected by the coachee and the process provides opportunities for reflection and problem solving for both coach and coachee.

#### Mentoring

Mentoring usually takes place at significant career events, such as to support induction or taking on new professional roles.

It has an element of 'gatekeeping', and the mentor is almost always someone more senior in the organisation.

There is often an organisational motive for the process; for example succession planning.

In some cases there is a requirement that the mentor provides documentary evidence of the mentoring process and its outcomes; for example demonstrating that the participant in mentoring has met certain competencies.

CfBT Education Trust, 2010

### It's not SMART!

SMART goals have occupied the language of managers, coaches and teachers for some 30 years, when the SMART acronym first came to prominence in the 1981 publication of *Management Review*. However, more recently, some experts have questioned their use in motivated goal-setting.

In his book *'Hundred Percenters'* (2009), **Mark Murphy**, CEO of Leadership IQ, reports on a study of 4,182 US employees from 397 companies and found that just 15 percent of those surveyed strongly agreed that their goals would help them achieve great things. Only 13 percent of workers strongly agreed that their goals would help them maximize their full potential.

The results of this and similar studies suggest that SMART goals can focus too heavily on the outcome, often lack sufficient challenge and fail to connect the person emotionally with their goal-to-be-achieved. The Leadership IQ study found that there was no statistical correlation between SMART goal-setting and employees achieving 'great things' in their organisation.

Murphy proposes a new goal-setting process called HARD goals. HARD goals are:

- **Heartfelt** — My goals will enrich the lives of somebody besides me — customers, the community, etc.
- **Animated** — I can vividly picture how great it will feel when I achieve my goals.
- **Required** — My goals are absolutely necessary to help me...(life goal, company goal)
- **Difficult** — I will have to learn new skills and leave my comfort zone to achieve my assigned goals for this year.

The best performers are those which are focused on the process of achieving the goals, not simply the final outcome, and that is the error of SMART goal-setting.

(Murphy, 2009)

## COACHING AND PERFORMANCE

### Coaching Frameworks



**Coaching & Cultures:** The more top-down and prescriptive the coaching framework, the less likely that individuals will embed the lessons learned from coaching (Adair, 2003)

### Coaching Skills



**Developing Coaching Expertise:** Expert coaches excel at these skills. Embedding a coaching culture means that every coach must do these things well. Time for training coaches is essential!

## Coaching for Better Performance: Doing the Right Things

Ferdinand Fournies (2000) claims that coaching for better performance starts with doing the right things. Consider the following three management actions to improve an employee's work performance:

- Offer bigger incentives to motivate the employee to work harder and smarter
- Ask the employee to do more than they actually can to raise their level of work output
- Threaten the employee until they change their behaviour to meet the desired work standard.

None of these actions will significantly improve performance in the longer-term (Fournies, 2000), so why do managers persist with them? Effective coaching starts by identifying:

- **What** performance the employee needs to improve
- The steps showing **how** the employee can improve

**Point 1:** For a manager to state that performance is below standard, they should have: (a) a clear definition of what performance is expected; and (b) a precise measurement of the gap between current performance and expected performance (*a gap analysis*).

**Point 2:** If a manager cannot tell an employee how to change their performance to meet the desired performance goal, then simply highlighting the problem is not going to be enough to change the problem. A manager or coach should also have a *practical plan* for how performance can be changed (*a step by step analysis*).

### Coaching with Precision:

Employees typically criticise coaches who therefore: 1/ cannot define precisely the performance they are looking for; and 2/ cannot articulate the steps, approaches or strategies that will enable the employee to make the desired change to their performance. There are many examples in FE where such precision is often missing: for example, the observer unable to confirm how a lesson could achieve grade 1; a manager asking a tutor to be 'a better team player', or a learner asked to 'improve' their essay writing skills. Precision is the key to successful coaching, and can be represented as:



However, if the coachee is resistant to your proposed action, you may need to consider the 'planting the seed' approach on page 5.

## Coaching Cultures

David Clutterbuck, at the 2014 Newbubbles National Conference, suggested that organisations wanting to embed coaching into their culture needed to adopt the following elements:

- Everyone learns at least the basics of coaching
- Everyone learns how to be coached
- Learning about coaching takes place over time, with opportunities to experiment and practise
- Everyone may be coached by anyone (including the leader/manager)
- Organisations provide time for staff to reflect together
- There is a positive psychological contract (relationship) between organisation and staff

Clutterbuck also argued that a return on an organisation's investment in coaching would be more likely if there was:

- An influential head of coaching and mentoring
- Continued top level backing
- Links to HR systems, developmental priorities (e.g. diversity) and customer responses
- Opportunities for continuous development of internal coaches/mentors and levels of qualification
- Measurement of relationship quality and coaching/mentoring behaviours as well as outcomes

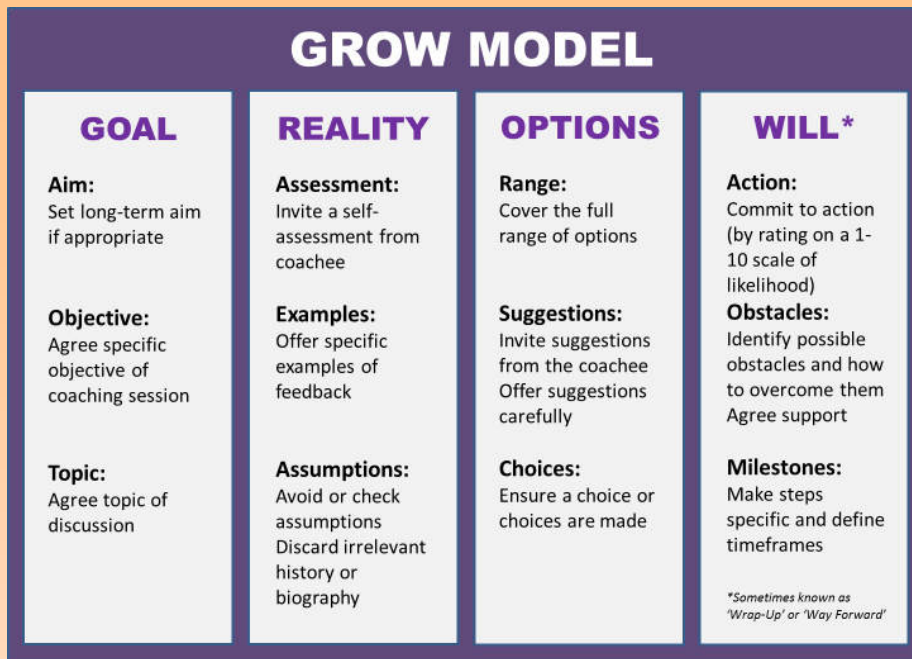
To implement a coaching culture, Clutterbuck suggests a 3 year plan which includes:

- Setting up a steering group
- Proposing a vision
- Leaders as role models
- An engagement strategy for staff
- A model of sustainable skills development
- Supporting coaching and mentoring behaviours
- Changing systems as well as people
- Using internal and external experts/ resources
- Measuring the progress



## COACHING TECHNIQUES: THE GROW MODEL

The GROW model was developed by **Sir John Whitmore** in the 1980s and is a popular coaching tool used by managers to structure a coaching conversation.



**Goal:** Possibly the most important of the stages in the success of a coaching conversation (Adair, 2003). What is the desired outcome? It must be specific, measurable, think SMART.

- Key Questions::**
- ✓ What do you want to achieve?
  - ✓ What is important to you now?
  - ✓ On what areas or issue do you want to work?
  - ✓ Describe your perfect world.
  - ✓ How will you know when this goal is achieved?
  - ✓ What is your ultimate, long-term goal?
  - ✓ What steps can you identify that will be essential to achieving your long-term goal?
  - ✓ What would you like to get out of the next 60 minutes?
  - ✓ What will make you feel this time has been well spent?

### Reality:

What is the current situation? What is stopping the goal from being reached? Check assumptions and incompatible beliefs.

- Key Questions::**
- ✓ Where are you now with your goal?
  - ✓ On a scale of 1 to 10 where are you?
  - ✓ What is working well?
  - ✓ What has contributed to your success so far?
  - ✓ What progress have you made so far?
  - ✓ What skills, knowledge and attributes do you have?
  - ✓ Does this goal conflict with anything else you are doing?
  - ✓ What is required of you?
  - ✓ What can you control?
  - ✓ What deadlines do you have?

**Options:** What possible ways are there available to the person to achieve their goal. Try not to 'give' the coachee ideas; more powerful solutions are the ones that are self-generated.

- Key Questions::**
- ✓ What are your options?
  - ✓ How have you tackled this or a similar situation in the past?
  - ✓ What could you do differently?
  - ✓ Who else has encountered a similar situation?
  - ✓ Which option feels right to you?
  - ✓ If anything was possible what would you do?
  - ✓ What could you do if you had more time, money, freedom?
  - ✓ If this constraint was removed, would it change things?
  - ✓ What do you need to stop doing to achieve this goal?

**Will:** The final stage of the conversation where you asking the coachee to commit to a course of action. Rating 'options' on a 1-10 scale is useful as options that fall below a '7' tend not be completed!

- Key Questions::**
- ✓ Which option works best for you?
  - ✓ What is your next step? Write it down.
  - ✓ What actions will you take?
  - ✓ When are you going to start?
  - ✓ How will you make sure that you do it?
  - ✓ Who will help and support you? When?
  - ✓ How will you know you have been successful?
  - ✓ On a scale of 1 to 10 how committed are you to taking the agreed actions?
  - ✓ What will you do to get this closer to a 10?
  - ✓ When shall we meet again to check progress?

Adapted from Duncan Haughey at ProjectSmart.co.uk

### 'Planting the Seed'

Based on Ferdinand Fournies (2000) concept of 'thought transmission'.

'Planting the Seed' is a persuasion technique - where you need to persuade others (who may not be open to advice) that a particular idea or course of action should be carried out. It is a technique that offers significant benefit to coaches and mentors.

But instead of telling the person what to do — which can invoke a blunt or resistant response - you 'encourage' them to come up with YOUR idea through a careful choice of words or questions (planting the seed). The result is that your idea is carried through and the other person thinks it was their idea. Perfect!

Communication is more than transmission – if it wasn't, people would give you back the word you said. But they don't, they give back something as a *result of what you said*.

The worst thing you can do if you want to introduce a new idea for adoption is to provide *all* of the information, because however hard people listen, their minds will be prompted to think of *something else*.

Therefore **successful communication is about thought transmission** – putting thoughts into other people's heads. If you have an idea you wish to communicate, you must say or do something that will cause that idea to appear in the other's head as a reaction to what you said or did.

In situations where you want staff involvement, the only way to know that staff really are involved is to *make sounds come out of their mouths*, not have them simply listen to what you want to tell them. How do you do this? **You ask questions the answer to which, is what you want to tell them!**

## PLANNING FOR CHANGE

“The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence – it is to act with yesterday’s logic “

Peter Drucker



“What if we don't change at all ... and something magical just happens?”

## MANAGING CHANGE

Managers need to know how to manage change. Change creates uncertainty and anxiety and needs to be implemented in a controlled and planned manner.

**Prochaska & DiClemente (1986)** produced a five-stage model to give managers a process for managing change effectively.

This model recognises that change must be approached in stages. It acknowledges that people’s disposition towards change, and their feelings about coping with change, need to be factored into change planning. In each stage, certain attitudes are prevalent, and specific management interventions (techniques) need to be adopted.



Stage of Change	Characteristics	Techniques
<b>Pre-Contemplation</b>	Not currently considering change. "ignorance is bliss" "I understand why you feel that way"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help staff develop a reason for changing</li> <li>Validate staff's lack of readiness</li> <li>Encourage a re-evaluation of current behaviour</li> <li>Emphasise exploration not action</li> </ul>
<b>Contemplation</b>	Ambivalent about change. "sitting on the fence"  Not considering change within the next month  "contemplators struggle to understand their problem, to see its causes, and to think about possible solutions"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage evaluation of pros and cons about change</li> <li>Establish where staff are and where they want to be</li> <li>Clarify: decision is theirs</li> <li>Instilling hope</li> </ul>
<b>Preparation</b>	Some experience with change and are trying to change. "Testing the waters"  Planning to act in 1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Praise decision to change</li> <li>Assist staff in identifying and removing obstacles to change</li> <li>Encourage small steps at a time</li> <li>Identify support mechanisms</li> </ul>
<b>Action</b>	Practising new behaviour for 3-6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforce reasons for change and recognise feelings of loss</li> <li>Provide support and coaching to boost staff's feeling of competence in the 'new' environment</li> </ul>
<b>Maintenance</b>	Continued commitment to sustaining new behaviour.  Post-6 months to 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for follow-up support</li> <li>Reward desired behaviours</li> <li>Emphasise the difference between now and the 'old ways'</li> </ul>

## Best Teachers

John Hattie, the great evidence-based teaching guru, has isolated *three* major attributes of the most effective teachers:

- Teachers use particular teaching methods based on evidence of 'what works'
- Teachers have high expectations for all students
- Highly positive teacher-student relationships

Expert teachers:

- Build respect for their learners as people with ideas of their own
- Are passionate about teaching and learning
- Use challenging learning tasks that demand 'deep learning'
- Show more emotionality about successes and failures in their work
- Invite students to 'engage', integrating and combining new learning with students prior knowledge.
- Use corrective feedback

## Selecting Coaches

A college seeking to appoint a new teaching and learning coach should recognise that the key to this role is the person's ability to build rapport and trust with staff.

**Gary Cohen**, of CO2 Partners— an executive coaching company — believes that there are 7 qualities (the 7C's) that should be considered when appointing someone to be a coach and change agent:

1. **Capability:** Has the skill and ability to do their job well
2. **Commitment:** Has the level of desire and focus toward the team's efforts
3. **Capacity:** Has the time, energy, and personal management skills to complete what needs to be done well and on time
4. **Connection:** Has the resources to complete the work that needs to be done
5. **Commonality:** Shares interests that help build and extend the relationship
6. **Consistency:** Has a strong track record of success and acts in a predictable fashion
7. **Character:** Has integrity



## TARGET SETTING AND MICRO-COACHING

Setting Challenging Targets, Measuring Progress and Evidencing the Learner JourneyBy Asa Sanderson & Paul Tully

**Teachers that use challenging targets effectively can turn the least motivated learners into role models and leaders within the group. Micro-Coaching is one way of doing this!**

**Stage 1:** Teachers help learners to develop a clear **vision** (or goal) of what they really want to achieve in the long term. What kind of learner do they want to be? What do they want to achieve? Where do they want to be in five years? Or simply, where do they need to be by the end of this session/week?

**Stage 2:** Teachers develop a **peer coaching structure** to enable learners to make progress against this goal. One way of doing this so to train learners in the art of “**micro coaching**”. Learners are divided into pairs, triads or small groups to help each other define and clarify ways in which their main goal could be achieved. Learners are introduced to different types of questioning and problem-solving tools, or may use *microteaching cards* (see *Tool 1, page 9*) to explore each other’s motivations and intentions for studying at college.

**Stage 3:** From the peer discussion, each learner identifies **a set of key milestones** which are key to the achievement of their main goal or long-term vision. These milestones are significant points along their learning journey (see *Tool 2, page 9*). One starting point could be the goals/targets identified at the beginning of the course (e.g. at initial assessment).

**Stage 4:** Learners work together in small groups to set each other ‘**concrete**’ **targets** that will help them achieve these key milestones. Initial targets may be confirmed, revised or changed in light of these peer-to-peer discussions whilst the teacher acts as facilitator.

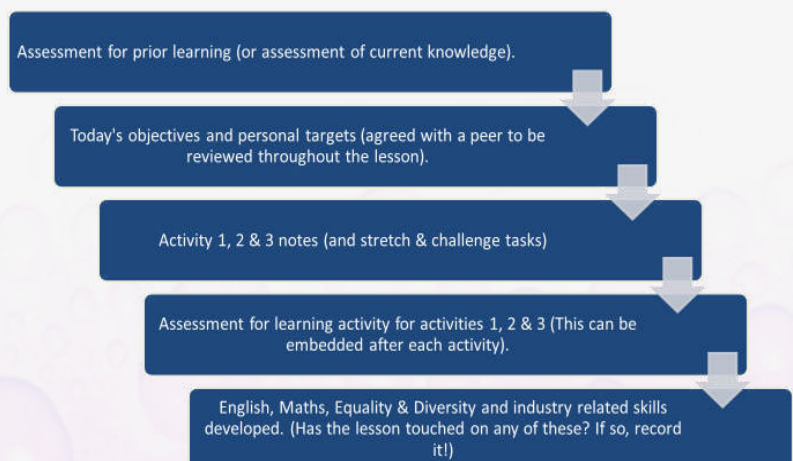
**Stage 5: Assessing progress** is essential to the success of this target-setting process. The **3-4 question Mini-Test** (*Tool 3, page 9*) is one way of doing this. Differentiated questions can be used to make sure all learners are actively engaged and being stretched and challenged – to do this, teachers can **set one question as an individual task, one as a paired task and one as a small group task**. Teachers can use this to measure the distance-travelled each learner makes towards their agreed targets. By setting differentiated questions, all learners will have something to contribute. *For a quick, well-organised and recorded measure of learner progress the mini-test can provide the perfect solution!*

Depending on the group and the time available, the teacher may need to be more directive with some learners in order to keep the target-setting process realistic and focused. To ensure these methods are used regularly, **generic, re-usable handouts** are an effective way for teachers to evidence each learner’s journey (*Tool 4, page 9*). The handouts can be used both to map the learner’s journey during a single session and/or their progress in an entire module / course year.

The design of the handout can be adapted to the level/prior attainment of each group, but is essentially constructed around 5 central information requirements (see diagram opposite). These requirements outline what teachers need to capture, what learners will need to know and what observers will love to see (see *page 9 for an extended description*).

\*\*\*\*\*

**In summary, the benefits of micro-coaching are multiple: learners take ownership of their progress, they recognise each other’s achievements, they provide solutions to each other’s problems, they develop important analytical and communication skills as peer coaches, and they produce a physical record of their progress in-session.**

*Micro-Coaching Process**Build your handouts around this journey...*

Asa Sanderson is a Freelance Coach in the Further Education sector. Paul Tully is editor of Newbubbles's Grade 1 Journal.

## TEACHING TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING MICRO-COACHING

The following micro-coaching tools are reproduced with the permission of Asa Sanderson at 'Outstanding Progress'.

The use of micro-coaching underlines the importance of learners taking responsibility for the setting, reviewing and achieving their learning targets and career goals. It is an empowering process for learners and puts reflection at the heart of the target-setting process.

### Tool 1: Micro-Coaching Cards - Exploring and Refining Learning Goals / Vision

Learners are given some or all of the micro-coaching cards and use the questions to explore each other's career goals, aspirations and motivations for studying on the course. Some examples are provided here, and you can easily make up your own.



www.outstandingprogress.co.uk

(Visualise your long term goal)

**In 3-5 years what career would you really like to be doing?**

What would the starting salary be?  
What would you need to wear to work?  
What times would you be working?  
What career progressions would be available?

(Motivation towards the long term goal)

**Is there anything that really motivates you to succeed?**

Is there anyone you would like to impress?  
Is there anyone you want to prove wrong?  
Do you need to prove it to yourself?  
Do you like to help others, make money or interact with others?

(Developing a support network)

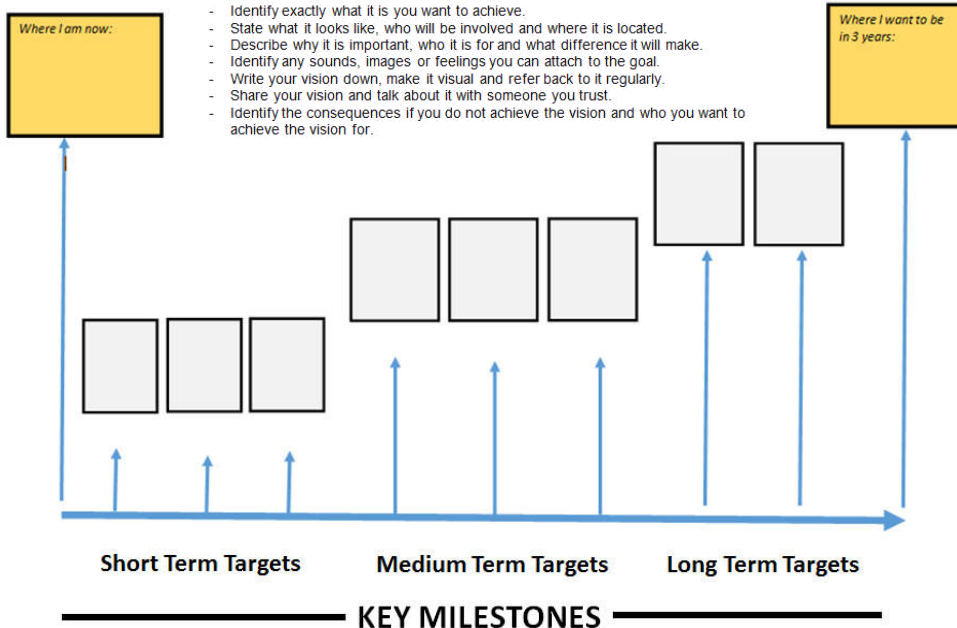
**Is there anyone that can help you with this?**

Do you know anyone doing this at the moment?  
Could your teachers help you with this goal?  
Is there anyone outside of education that can help?

### Tool 2: Identifying Key Milestones

Tips to set a clear vision:

- Identify exactly what it is you want to achieve.
- State what it looks like, who will be involved and where it is located.
- Describe why it is important, who it is for and what difference it will make.
- Identify any sounds, images or feelings you can attach to the goal.
- Write your vision down, make it visual and refer back to it regularly.
- Share your vision and talk about it with someone you trust.
- Identify the consequences if you do not achieve the vision and who you want to achieve the vision for.



### Tool 4: Progress Handout

Creating a handout for recording learner progress around the following structure will provide robust evidence of how each learner is doing in the classroom:

\*\*\*\*\*

Module Aim: .....

• Learning Outcome 1:

Describe how to.....

• Learning Outcome 2:

Demonstrate how to.....

• Learning Outcome 3:

Evaluate why....

Recap—Three Questions:

Answer 1: .....(simple Q)

Answer 2: .....(moderate Q)

Answer 3: .....(advanced Q)

Learning Activities:

- Get learners to make notes about what they have learned from each learning activity
- Include 3-5 new vocabulary terms which have to be defined by the end of the session.

Assessment — Three Questions:

- Individually identify.....
- In pairs, explain.....
- In small groups, evaluate....

**Skills Developed** — learners complete a table to say what they have learned in respect of:

- Equality & Diversity
- Maths & English skills
- Employability skills

### Tool 3: Mini-Test — Assessing Progress Against Short-Term Targets or Learning Outcomes

For a quick, well organised and recorded measure of learner progress the mini-test can provide an ideal way to end the lesson.

#### Three Question Test:

- Individually identify.....
- In pairs, explain.....
- Working in small groups of four you need to evaluate.....

Asa Sanderson is a Freelance Coach in the Further Education sector



## COACHING TEACHERS AFTER A GRADE 3 OR GRADE 4 LESSON OBSERVATION

By Joanne Miles (2013)

There is a widespread perception that the new Common Inspection Framework (2012) has raised the bar for standards in T&L. Teachers are stating that a grade 2 under the previous inspection framework will now be graded 3, due to the greater attention on 1/ the learner 2/ learning and 3/ on the impact on learner achievement. Consequently, in some colleges there are now higher numbers of teachers being graded 3 or 4. Mentoring or coaching staff in this position can be a challenging process. It is sensitive work and requires a skillful coach or mentor to provide the required support.



### Attitudes and opinions

- Teachers can feel that they should not have been given the grade 3 or 4 because they dispute the comments from the observer and their judgment on what happened in the lesson
- Some people feel the person who observed them was not an appropriate observer as they did not have a related teaching background
- Teachers who have previously gained a grade 2 or 1 react to the implication that somehow they have somehow “deteriorated” as a practitioner since their last observation
- Some people dispute the validity of the whole observation process, feeling it cannot accurately represent their practice

The situation is an emotive one and it is easy to empathise with the teacher's reaction. Some reactions include:

### Reactions and Behaviours

- Teachers are resentful, angry or outraged and want to get it out of their systems: “*It wasn't fair... I don't accept the feedback.....that observer wasn't able to judge me fairly as he had no idea about my subject area*”
- Teachers can be demoralised and deflated and show a low level of confidence in their own teaching “*I did really badly in that lesson.... I think I just messed up all my questioning as I felt so distracted and stressed*”
- Teachers can be quietly resistant to the whole development process after observation: “*Yes, that does sound like a good idea to try*” while secretly having no engagement with the conversation and no intention of changing anything
- Teachers can be open to the process and see it as a developmental opportunity: “*Actually, that has been an issue for me and I'd like to work on it...*”

### Pointers and tips for coaches and mentors

For coaches and mentors who are supporting staff in these difficult situations, it can be helpful to:

- Stay focused on the fact that you are supporting the teacher and trying to develop their practice. Don't treat this as a tick box exercise that only deals with the observed development points. Try to engage the teacher in an honest discussion about areas that challenge them and their learners..
- Stay away from judging the observer and getting involved with the teacher's (possibly justified!) rants about the unfairness of the feedback. You weren't there and so you can't judge what happened in the lesson. If the written feedback report is very vague or too general, you may need more info from the observer. If the teacher totally disputes the grade, signpost the process of challenging it formally as this is not your role.
- Give the teacher space to let off steam. When a teacher reacts angrily to a grade, it can take several meetings for them to be able to focus on a developmental conversation. Sometimes the coach needs to just listen, show empathy without stoking the fire, and then re-iterate their role in the process. Watch for the energy change or language shift that shows it might be a good time to re-direct the conversation onto developmental topics.
- Be careful about wanting to solve it all for them and flooding them with suggestions and materials, because you feel sympathetic and want to help! Your role is to encourage reflection, extend thinking and application, encourage experimentation, reduce blocks and enable the teacher to think their way through the process in their own way. Avoid advice that encourages them to ‘copy’ your lesson plans and teaching style — It is likely to lead to the teacher performing unnaturally in a re-observation. Instead plan carefully some meaty questions to help them think deeply.
- Try to find real areas of interest for that teacher early on. Sometimes a quick peer observation (i.e. you watch them teach and they watch you teach) is a good way to build trust and start a real conversation about learning.
- Ensure you are clear on what you should be noting down in your coaching sessions and where and who will see these written minutes as confidentiality is key to trust building. Check this with your leader.
- Realise that in some cases people are not ready or willing to engage in this process with you or anyone. This can mean they are evasive, miss meetings, block communication with you. If this happens, talk quickly to your coaching leader for confidential advice, as it often needs to be addressed by the coaching leader or manager instead of the coach.
- Watch other more experienced coaches during a coaching session. You can learn a lot from their choices — in terms of what to say, what to ask and what to ignore.

Joanne Miles is a freelance consultant in coaching and observation

## GIVING GREAT FEEDBACK

John Hattie's work on 'What Works' in the classroom identifies good feedback as the essential lubricant of effective learning and achievement. Good feedback can improve learning by 50% in a given timeframe (Petty on Hattie, 2003)

*"I shall always be a flower girl to Professor Higgins because he always treats me as a flower girl ... But I know I can be a lady to you because you always treat me as a lady, and always will..." (My Fair Lady, 1963)*

### Factors that affect motivation in tasks:

People are motivated when they are:

- Clear about what is expected
- Supported by managers or supervisors
- Recognised for their efforts
- Contributing in a way which is positive and recognisable
- Free to express their views and ideas
- Challenged in a way which helps them to develop and be more creative



Therefore, feedback has to be:

- Descriptive - of the behaviour not the person
- Specific - rather than general
- Sensitive - to the needs of the receiver (as well as the giver)
- Focused - on changeable behaviour i.e. things that the coachee can control
- Timely - given close to the event (but dependent on coachee's readiness to receive)
- Selective - looks at one or two areas to address

Jennifer King (1999), a chartered psychologist, asked medical trainees to identify the characteristics that made feedback a positive or negative experience:

#### Most Commonly Cited Positive Features

- ✓ mutual respect
- ✓ specific praise or criticism
- ✓ a genuine desire to help
- ✓ allowing time for discussion

#### Most Commonly Cited Negative Features

- ✓ public humiliation
- ✓ comments on personality ('You are...')
- ✓ no opportunity for a two way discussion
- ✓ lack of personal interest
- ✓ too general
- ✓ too little too late

## STRUCTURING GREAT FEEDBACK

King (1999) describes a 4-stage model for conducting feedback sessions where the aim is to support the coachee/ mentee to achieve something that they cannot yet do:

1. The trainee is asked to start by identifying his or her own strengths
2. The trainer reinforces these and adds further strengths
3. The trainee is asked to identify areas for improvement
4. The trainer reinforces these, adding further areas if necessary.

The danger is to start at stages 3 or 4 which immediately puts the person on the defensive.

As King (1999) explains: 'the structure works on the simple principle of an emotional bank balance - withdrawals cannot be sustained without credits in place first. It also embodies, that crucial balance of support and challenge. It does not allow either party to downplay strengths or to duck difficult issues.'

From King, J, *BMJ* 1999;318:S2-7200

## Defensive Reactions

It is always useful for the coach or mentor to be able to spot the different forms of defensive reaction that can be present in a feedback conversation:

Jennifer King (1999) describes four types of response that the coachee/mentee may exhibit:

- **Blaming** - "It's not my fault. What can you expect when the patient won't listen?"
- **Denial** - "I can't see any problem with that"
- **Rationalisation** - "I've had a particularly bad week" "Doesn't everyone do this?"
- **Anger** - "I've had enough of this"

King also highlights some of the negative behaviours that can occur in coaches or mentors when they encounter such 'defensive' reactions.

- **Obligation** - "I'm duty-bound to tell you this"
- **Moral high ground** - "It's for your own good"
- **Burying and fudging** - Taking a long time to get to the point and covering many irrelevancies
- **Minimising** - "Don't worry, it's not such a big deal. Everyone does it at some time"
- **Colluding** - "You're probably right, perhaps I am overreacting"

The important point for coaches and mentors is to recognise when these behaviours occur and remove them.

### Better responses for dealing with resistance include:

- Name and explore the resistance - "You seem bothered by this. Help me understand why"
- Keep the focus positive - "Let's recap your strengths and see if we can build on any of these to help address this problem"
- Try to convince the trainee to own one part of the problem - "So you would accept that on that occasion you did lose your temper"
- Negotiate - "I can help you with this issue, but first I need you to commit to ..."
- Allow time out - "Do you need some time to think about this?"
- Allow time out - "Do you need some time to think about this?"
- Keep the responsibility where it belongs - "What will you do to address this?"



## MODELS OF GIVING FEEDBACK

There are several models and frameworks for giving feedback, which aim to ensure that it is specific, fair and useful to the learner.

### MODEL 1: PENDLETON'S RULES (Pendleton, 1984)

A common model for giving feedback was developed by Pendleton (1984), originally for clinical education settings, but there is some merit for its adoption in teacher observations.

1. Check the learner wants and is ready for feedback.
2. Let the learner give comments/background to the material that is being assessed.
3. The learner states what was done well.
4. The observer(s) state what was done well.
5. The learner states what could be improved.
6. The observer(s) state *how* it could be improved.
7. An action plan for improvement is made.

Although this model provides a useful framework, there have been some criticisms of its rigid and formulaic nature.

### MODEL 2: SET-GO (Silverman, 1996)

A useful feedback model which combines group and individual elements. This is effective in learning activities using peer coaching /assessment in which learners give feedback to other learners. Relevant activities where this model could be applied include:

- A peer critique of art work or drama performance
- Feedback on another group's presentation
- The completion of a procedure or task under peer observation

The feedback is conducted in the following sequence:

1. **S** - the teacher asks the peer coaches 'What they **SAW**' (specific, descriptive)
2. **E** - the teacher asks the peer coaches what **ELSE** they saw (stretching, elaborative)
- T** - the teacher asks the learner what they **THOUGHT** about the activity (encouraging them to problem solve any difficulties they encountered), and then THANKS them for their effort

The teacher might engage in a number of these 'SETs' with different groups of learners. At the end of the activity, the teacher uses the whole-group to:

4. **G** - Clarify new **GOAL(s)** arising from the feedback sessions.
5. **O** - Asks the group for **OFFERS** on how these goal(s) could be achieved

### MODEL 3: BOOST

The BOOST model enshrines the key principles of high quality feedback.

Feedback should be:

1. **B** - Balanced: includes both positive and negative points
2. **O** - Observed: the coach gives examples of performance that they have personally observed; assumptions, hearsay, previous experience with the coachee's situation are not acceptable
3. **O** - Objective: feedback should be factual and based on actions rather than your personal relationship to the coachee
4. **S** - Specific: feedback targets particular behaviours and is supported by relevant examples. Exactly how or why was the action performed well or badly? Avoid generalisations.
5. **T** - Timely: feedback should be given as close to the event as possible to ensure accuracy and effectiveness.

## Fostering Reflection

Simple questions for the mentor and coach to help foster reflection and insight might include:

- What were you trying to accomplish?
- How did you go about completing the lesson and solving problems you had along the way (process)?
- How do you know if you were successful?
- What did you do well (strengths)?
- What did you have difficulty with (weaknesses)?
- What have you learned from this experience?
- What would you do differently?
- Where could you go to get more information?



## THE DISC MODEL

DISC is a model of feedback where the coach or mentor is tackling performance which is not meeting a required standard, and where there is a likelihood of a difficult conversation ahead:

**Describe the situation** – provide a detailed account of the performance/ behaviour and the standards not being met.

**Impact** – describe the effects, physical, financial, emotional on the coachee, others, yourself etc when this behaviour occurs

**Specify what needs to change** – state what needs to change and HOW it can be changed.

**Consequences** - state what is likely to happen when the behaviour is changed or not changed.

## SOLUTIONS-COACHING FOR QUALITY MANAGERS

## Main Building Blocks of Solutions-Focused Coaching



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## Further Reading

Effective Coaching

John Adair (2003)

## Next issue ...

## Assessment for Learning

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## The Solutions Process

There are FOUR main tools used by effective solutions-focused coaches:

## 1. The Miracle Question

This question asks the coachee to describe in detail how his situation would be if a miracle had happened and the problems he now faces had been solved. Inviting the client to visualize his life when the problem no longer exists has a surprisingly strong effect.

## 2. Positive Exceptions

There are *always* exceptions to the problem, situations in which the problem is not happening, or to a lesser extent than usually. The coach asks the client to search for past occurrences when this exception has taken place and gets them to identify its specific features.

## 3. Using Scales — Visualising Progress

The coach asks the coachee to imagine a scale from 0 to 10. The 10 stands for the situation in which the coachee has fully achieved his goals; the 0 stands for the situation in which the problem happens at its worst. The coach asks the coachee where s/he is now on that scale and what this point at the scales means to him/her. Next, the coach asks the client what the situation would look like on the next step of the scale. The focus is on visualizing things being a little better. Step by step progress is being made. Taking small steps is essential. Small steps require only minimal effort but their effects can be large because they often unexpectedly start off a chain of positive events.

## 4. Compliments

A solution-focused coach frequently compliments the coachee, both directly and indirectly. A direct compliment might be: 'I think you handled that fantastically!' An example of an indirect compliment is: 'how did you manage to accomplish such a difficult task?' Indirect compliments are invitations to the client to compliment him or herself on what they have achieved.